

## OUR BOYS

## AND GIRLS

## The GREAT ROTARY MAIL BOX

And the Strange Adventure Which Befell Its Inventor

BY ARTHUR MORGAN LANGWORTHY

THIS story really began away last summer, when the boys used to go to the old swimming hole on Duck Creek. There were the remains of an ancient foot bridge which spanned the creek just above the swimming hole. It was here where they pursued that exciting sport of "whoop the hoop."

And that makes you think of loop the loop, doesn't it? Whoop the hoop was designated to be just such a "thriller," as far as excitement went, and this is how they did it.

The railings and most of the flooring of the foot bridge were gone. There was just enough footing left for a nimble boy to pick his way across by careful balancing, as the remains of the flooring narrowed down in some places to little more than a foot's width. Still what flooring there was was smooth enough to roll a hoop across, if you could only keep it from rolling off the flooring into the water—and going with it yourself!

That was the great "stunt." The "whoop" part of whoop the hoop consisted of the howls and whoops of the assembled bunch of swimmers under the bridge, who did everything in their power to rattle the daring "whoop the hoop" above them. A single false movement and he splashed down into their clutches to be thoroughly ducked!

This novel sport was invented by Pliny Quick, who after several trials and duckings first performed the feat successfully. He afterward grew so expert that he became the champion and could get across safely nearly every time.

Summer passed away. Fall came on with all its different sports and occupations. Pliny Quick's inventive mind was taken up with the usual number of great inventions and improvements for the benefit of mankind and boys kind. Most of these projects were just practical enough for the outraged victims to class them as practical jokes, even if the inventor innocently never intended them as such. The only royalties they brought him were some royal old scratches.

But there was one improvement which stands out as a real advance in world improvement—his great rotary mail box—"a sterling achievement along creative lines," as the editor of the Oakdale Clarion said in describing it. Pliny invented it under the following conditions:

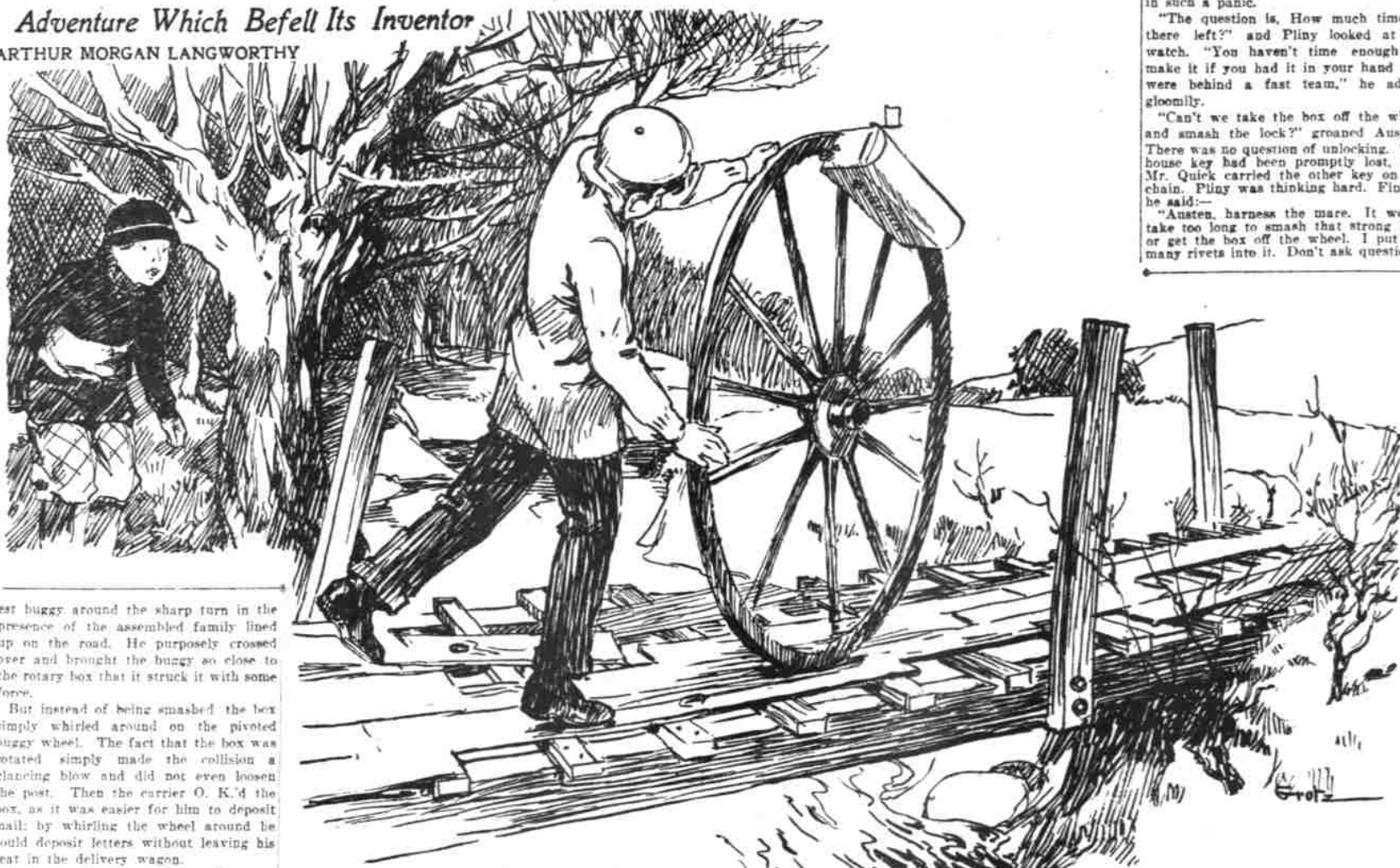
He lived on the outskirts of Oakdale, thus being upon one of the rural free delivery mail routes. If you live in the city you are unfamiliar with country mail boxes, as your mail is delivered at your door. But in the country the house may be set far back from the road. This makes the mail carrier lose too much time in bringing letters far in the door, so mail boxes are set up on posts alongside the road.

The Quick mail box was placed at a turn in the road. The sharp corner had resulted in several disasters—to the mail box—when wagons or automobiles had veered too far to one side of the road in making the turn. The box was struck and the post broken off.

Pliny Quick set his wife to work. He put up a new post, inserting a round iron bolt in the center of the post top. This played football that afternoon, so a round rejected far enough out of the post top served as a hub for the rotary mail box, which was simply a lumpy wheel secured on the thread end of the hub. The letter box was now fastened to the outer rim of the horizontal lumpy wheel, and the rotary mail box was complete, as shown in the drawing.

Pliny claimed that his rotary idea was an improvement in this way. Rotary means, of course, that the object applied to turn around in a circle, and the mail box certainly did, being on the outer rim of the lumpy wheel.

The official test of the new device was impressive. Pliny drove his father's old



Carefully Pushing the Big Wheel in Front of Him

est buggy around the sharp turn in the presence of the assembled family lined up on the road. He purposely crossed over and brought the buggy so close to the rotary box that it struck it with some force.

But instead of being smashed the box simply whirled around on the pivoted lumpy wheel. The fact that the box was rotated simply made the collision a glancing blow and did not even loosen the post. Then the carrier O. K'd the box, as it was easier for him to deposit mail by whirling the wheel around he could deposit letters without leaving his seat in the delivery wagon.

And now for the strange adventure which resulted from Pliny's rotary mail box.

It happened a few afternoons after the test of the great invention. Pliny was busy painting the back stoop when he was much surprised to see his brother Austen come rushing into the yard.

"Why aren't you playing football?" Any one hurt?" he demanded anxiously, noting the worried look on Austen's face.

"Say, I've made an awful break!" groaned Austen, "and you'll have to get me out of it!" Then Austen went on to explain. "You remember that letter father gave me to mail this afternoon just before he started for Martin's place?"

Pliny remembered well. There had nearly been a fight over it. Mr. Quick, who was a lawyer, had forgotten to mail an important letter in town. He usually drove home every noon to luncheon, going back to Oakdale for afternoon court session. But today he had to see Farmer Martin in regard to a lawsuit over a drove of hogs which had escaped and strayed on the railroad tracks, where they met with disaster. The letter had to be mailed, and Austen was ordered to mail it in town. This happened just as Austen returned from school.

Austen had other plans. He intended to host in the center of the post top. This played football that afternoon, so a round rejected far enough out of the post top served as a hub for the rotary mail box, which was simply a lumpy wheel secured on the thread end of the hub. The letter box was now fastened to the outer rim of the horizontal lumpy wheel, and the rotary mail box was complete, as shown in the drawing.

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The official test of the new device was impressive. Pliny drove his father's old

team to score first. He felt very well satisfied with himself. During the rest period between the quarters this is what he overheard one spectator say to another:

"Hear about the R. F. D. accident? Carrier went into ditch, wagon wrecked! won't be any more mail collected to-day." Austen frantically questioned the speaker and learned the accident took place above

the house. His father's letter was still lying in Pliny's mail box!

The Oakdale School team always blamed the loss of that game to Austen's sudden, unexplained withdrawal. Austen knew how important that letter was. That was why he appeared before Pliny in such a panic.

"The question is, How much time is there left?" and Pliny looked at his watch. "You haven't time enough to make it if you had it in your hand and were behind a fast team," he added gloomily.

"Can't we take the box off the wheel and smash the lock?" groaned Austen. There was no question of unlocking. The house key had been promptly lost, and Mr. Quick carried the other key on his chain. Pliny was thinking hard. Finally he said:

"Austen, harness the mare. It would take too long to smash that strong lock or get the box off the wheel. I put too many rivets into it. Don't ask questions."

every second counts. Hurry and pick me up out of this box."

When Austen drove out he found Pliny holding the buggy wheel in his hand. He had detached it from the post. The box was, of course, on the wheel rim. Pliny hastily piled the wheel and box into the buggy, jumped in and Austen started the mare.

"Whoa!" shouted Pliny. "You're going the wrong way!"

"Why, this is the way to Oakdale!" "Don't ask questions!" impatiently cried Pliny. "I'm running this thing!" and he made Austen turn around to go exactly opposite.

They drove perhaps half a mile when Pliny told his brother to take a branch road. The wondering Austen soon brought up on the creek road.

"Say, where are you going?" he finally demanded angrily. "I'm taking this box to father just as fast as I can get there. There's a big short cut from Martin's to Oakdale."

"Pliny, you're a chump! Here you are, at least three miles out of your way. You've got to cross the creek, and the wagon bridge is that far off if you're really going to Martin's farm."

"Who said anything about the wagon bridge?" snorted Pliny as they skirted Duck Creek. "Stop right here," he commanded. Austen did so, looked at the creek and exclaimed in alarm:

"Nothing doing on that, Pliny!" "Watch me!" answered Pliny, grimly dumping out the buggy wheel mail box. "I wasn't whoop the hoop champion for nothing!" There was no use carrying the wheel; it was too heavy for a small boy to keep his footing with along the slippery, narrow surface, for Pliny had come straight to the ruined footbridge where he'd won his championship last summer.

But that was a long way compared to now. It had snowed slightly that day and the slender footbridge was wet with slush. And that ice cold water underneath! One misstep—waugh!

It was probably the only time when Pliny was known to willingly put on his rubbers. He did now, and started carefully pushing the big wheel in front of him. Austen looked fearfully on. Pliny gingerly threaded his way over the planks—slipped—a quick recovery—a bit slower progress—he was across!

The Martin farm was very close by. Pliny disappeared over the hill, rolling the box on the wheel just as he would a hoop. Austen went home to wait in great fear and suspense. Two hours later he heard the sound of wheels. He retired to the woodshed—a good place to be if it was bad news. Here Pliny found him.

"Come in, you're safe," laughed Pliny. "We just made the 6:45 with Martin's auto. Pa asked me what reward I wanted and I got it. I begged off for you!"

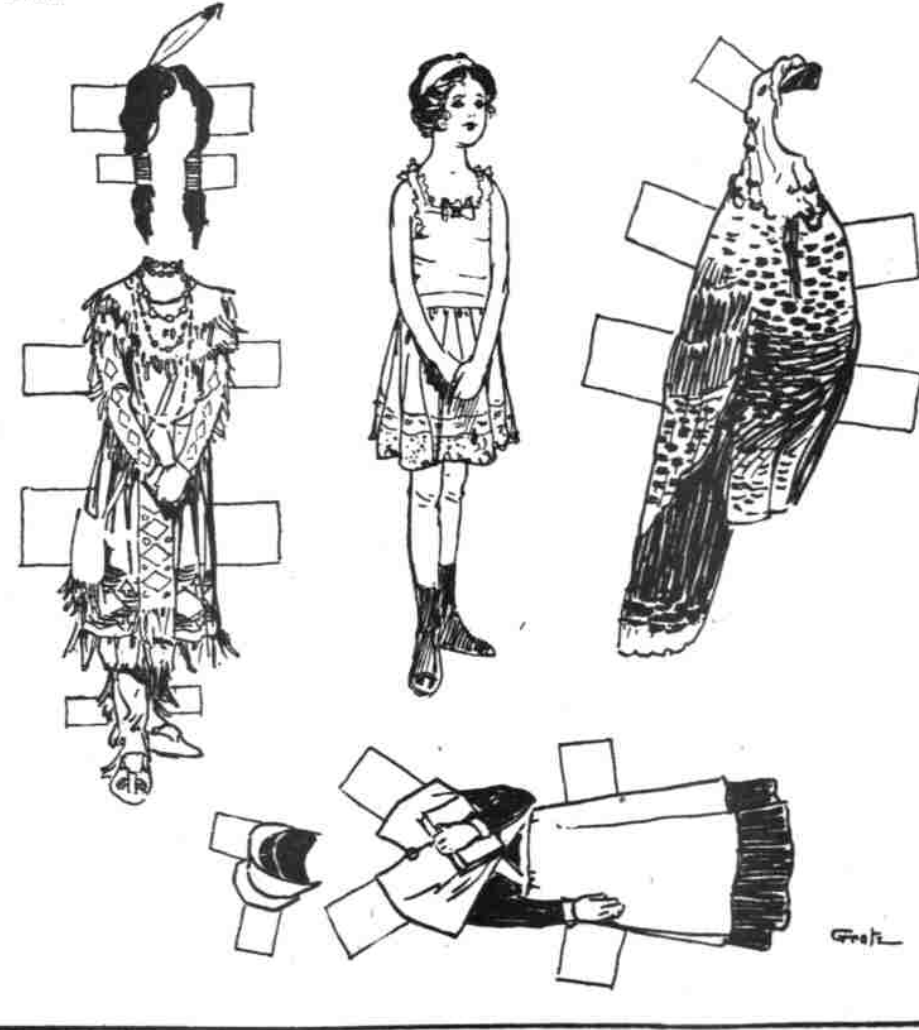
## Riddle Answer.

The answer to last week's riddle was "A Mountain."

## MISS PAPER DOLL'S THANKSGIVING COSTUMES

MISS PAPER DOLL went to her grandmother's house in the country to spend her Thanksgiving Day and she had a perfectly lovely time. One of the things which amused Miss Paper Doll and her cousins very much was dressing up in costumes which were suitable to the occasion. They went up into the old garret of the farmhouse and found lots of bright paper and other things from which to make costumes. The first costume that they made was like that of the old Puritans who lived in New England and were the first people in the world who ever had a Thanksgiving Day. The modest little frock, with primly crossed kerchief, which was one of the Thanksgiving masquerade costumes, was exactly like the costume which the little Puritan girls wore so long ago. After this all the Paper Doll cousins made themselves Indian suits of the bright-colored paper which they found. Miss Paper Doll herself had a little squaw outfit that made her look exactly like the little savage girls who used to live in the big American woods in the days when the Puritans had their first Thanksgiving. The little Puritan girl must often have seen the little Indian girl in those old days. Then for their last costumes the children, just for a joke, made paper turkey outfits, and when they got these on they looked exactly like the biggest old gobblers that you could possibly imagine.

When they all put on these turkey costumes and ran downstairs, where the older members of the family were gathered together, you may know how astonished the older ones were. For a moment they thought they had eaten too much Thanksgiving dinner and were having waking nightmare. Cut out the three costumes and see how Miss Paper Doll looks in them.



## A Thanksgiving Dinner Menu



Soup.

Roast.

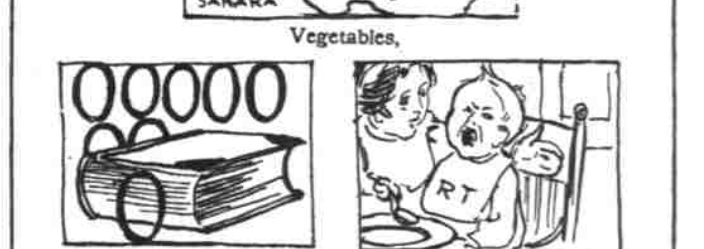


Vegetables.



Salad.

Dessert.



Dessert.

Salad.



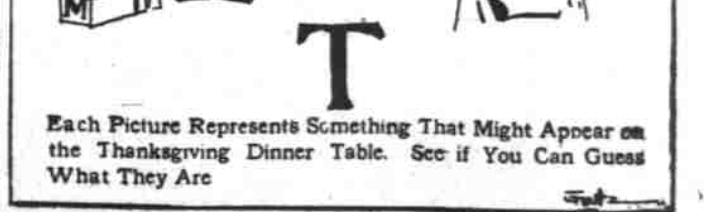
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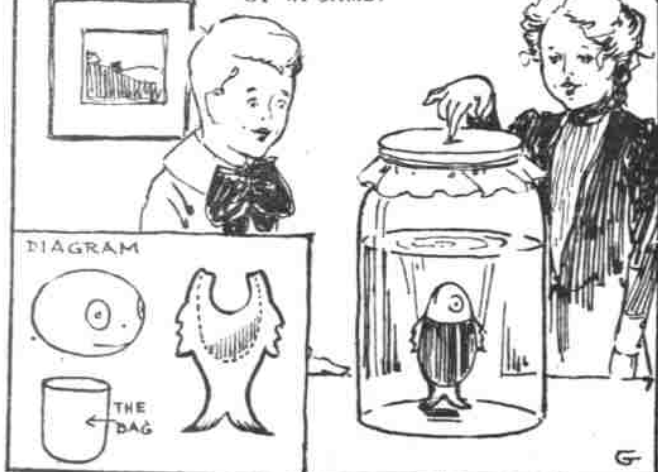


Dessert.

Salad.

## THE OBEDIENT FISH

BY W. SAMET



MAKE a hole in each end of a raw egg and blow out the contents. Close up one opening with a little wax. On the eggshell draw with a pencil two great eyes, as shown in the diagram. Then make a little bag out of red flannel, sewn together in the place shown by the dotted line in the drawing.

After the bag has been weighted with small shot stick half of the egg into it so that the opening of the shell is inside the bag; then fasten with red sealing wax the ends of your bag to the eggshell and your fish is ready.

You must place it in a glass vessel filled with water and cover it with a piece of

bladder. The weight in the bag must be so arranged that the fish will swim on the surface or sink to the bottom at the slightest touch.

Now, if you press on the bladder a little water will be forced into the fish through the hole which you made; thus the fish will become heavier and sink to the bottom. If you slacken the pressure the compressed air in the shell will force the water out, so that the fish will become lighter and rise to the surface.

## WARDROBE TRUNKS FOR THE FASHIONABLE DOLL.

DOLLS who have large wardrobes that should be carefully taken care of are now using wardrobe trunks in which to pack their clothes when they go traveling. These trunks are not only useful to carry clothes in, but when the doll has arrived at her destination they can be set up in a room and used as wardrobes.

Instead of being made like a large box in which the clothes can be packed, these wardrobe trunks are so built that the clothes can be hung on hangers and the hangers suspended from the top of the trunk. The trunk is deep and wide, but

not so very thick through. To make such a trunk you will need a deep cardboard box, deep enough to hang your doll's clothes from the top so that they will not come quite to the bottom of the box. The box may be as wide across as possible, because the wider it is the more dresses can be hung in it. From front to back it need only be wide enough to accommodate the width of the gowns, as they will be hung up crosswise.

The hangers for the trunk are hung from the under part of the lid. The hangers are made of wire twisted in two loops and fastened in the middle. They should be as wide as your doll's frocks and coats. A loop of cord or ribbon is

Each Picture Represents Something That Might Appear on the Thanksgiving Dinner Table. See if You Can Guess What They Are